

# The Burden of Tobacco on the Workplace

Businesses are constantly looking for ways to cut costs and increase productivity, and employee health can substantially impact a business's bottom line. Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the United States.<sup>1</sup> In Indiana, smoking takes the lives of 11,100 Hoosiers each year and significantly impacts the economic vitality of our state.<sup>2</sup>

## Economic Burden of Tobacco Use

About 1 in 5 Hoosier adults (19.2%) were current smokers in 2019.<sup>3</sup> Smoking among employees increases costs for both employers and society, resulting in poorer health, increased healthcare costs, increased absenteeism, and reduced productivity.<sup>1,4</sup>

In the United States, smoking costs over \$300 billion annually, including:

- Nearly \$170 billion in healthcare costs<sup>1</sup>
- Over \$151 billion in lost productivity<sup>1</sup>

In Indiana, smoking costs over \$6 billion annually, including:

- Over \$2.9 billion in healthcare costs<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly \$3.2 billion in lost productivity<sup>5</sup>

## What Tobacco Costs Employers

### *Healthcare and Lost Productivity*

The annual cost to employers of a smoking employee is estimated to be \$5,800 higher than a non-smoking employee.<sup>4</sup> This includes:

- Over \$2,000 more in healthcare costs
- Over \$3,500 more in lost productivity

### *Increased Risk of Occupational Health Hazards*

Smoking and secondhand smoke exposure may make employees more vulnerable to health hazards from occupational exposure to other substances such as dusts, gases, or fumes.<sup>6</sup>

### *Fire and Injury Risk*

Smoking at the workplace, including in vehicles, can increase the risk of fires and injuries.<sup>6</sup> The increased fire and injury risk for worksites where smoking is allowed can increase health and building insurance costs by up to 30%.<sup>7</sup>

### *Increased Maintenance Costs*

Worksites where smoking is allowed pay about \$728 more per 1,000 square feet in annual maintenance costs than worksites where smoking is not allowed.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Fast Facts***

- Smoking costs Hoosiers over **\$2.9 billion in health care costs<sup>2</sup>** and nearly **\$3.2 billion in lost productivity<sup>5</sup>** annually.
- Employers spend an extra **\$5,800 annually for a smoking employee** than a non-smoking employee due to increased health care costs and reduced productivity.<sup>4</sup>
- About **1 in 5** Hoosier adults (19.2%) were current smokers in 2019.<sup>3</sup>

### **Businesses can help reduce their tobacco burden by:**

- Making their workplace 100% tobacco-free
- Offering health insurance that covers tobacco cessation benefits
- Connecting employees with resources like the Indiana Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW)
- Becoming a Quit Now Preferred Employer

# The Burden of Tobacco on the Workplace

---

## Tobacco Use and Secondhand Smoke Exposure among U.S. Workers

Approximately 20% of the U.S. adult workforce smokes, and an estimated 20% of non-smoking workers continue to be exposed to secondhand smoke at work.<sup>6</sup> Smoking and secondhand smoke exposure, however, tend to be higher among workers in some industries than others. In particular, workers in blue-collar fields, such as construction and mining, and workers in accommodation and food service industries tend to report higher rates of smoking and secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>6</sup>

## What Employers Can Do to Reduce Their Tobacco Burden

### *Go Tobacco-Free*

Making your worksite tobacco-free, including grounds and vehicles, can lower the risk of fires and injuries and may reduce maintenance costs and insurance premiums.<sup>8</sup> Workplace smoke-free policies can also help reduce smoking among workers.<sup>9</sup>

### *Cover Cessation Benefits*

Offering health insurance that covers cessation benefits, such as approved medication and counseling, with little or no co-pays can help employees access the help they need to quit tobacco.

### *Connect Employees with Cessation Resources*

The Indiana Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW, [www.QuitNowIndiana.com](http://www.QuitNowIndiana.com)) is a free telephone, web, and text counseling service that provides evidence-based coaching and support to Hoosiers who want to quit tobacco. To order Quitline materials, please visit [quitnowindiana.com/employer-materials](http://quitnowindiana.com/employer-materials) and complete the online order form.

### *Become a Quit Now Preferred Employer*

By joining the Indiana Quit Now Preferred Employer Network, employers have access to free resources and services to help employees quit tobacco. Visit [www.QuitNowIndiana.com](http://www.QuitNowIndiana.com) for more information about how to become a preferred employer.

## References

- 1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS). The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: USDHHS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP), Office on Smoking and Health (OSH), 2014.
  - 2 CDC. Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs – 2014. Atlanta: USDHHS, CDC, NCCDPHP, OSH, 2014.
  - 3 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019.
  - 4 Berman M, Crane R, Seiber E, Munur M. Estimating the cost of a smoking employee. *Tob Control* 2014; 23: 428-433.
  - 5 Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Indiana. Accessed November 12, 2020 from <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/indiana/>.
  - 6 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Current intelligence bulletin 67: promoting health and preventing disease and injury through workplace tobacco policies. Morgantown, WV: USDHHS, CDC, NIOSH, 2015.
  - 7 CDC Foundation. Tobacco Use: Turning Workplace Challenges into Opportunities. Accessed October 3, 2019 from <https://www.cdcfoundation.org/blog-entry/businesspulse-tobacco-use>.
  - 8 CDC. Save Lives, Save Money: Make Your Business Smoke-Free. Atlanta: USDHHS, CDC, NCCDPHP, OSH, 2006.
  - 9 USDHHS. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: USDHHS, CDC, NCCDPHP, OSH, 2006.
- Updated 11/12/2020